

Raspberry & Peaches



Why do we seem to find it so difficult to persuade people to experience the arts? Could it be that we are not talking to people in the right way? Almost all audience members need straightforward answers to three straightforward questions: What is it about? What is it like? How am I going to feel when I experience it? In a bid to get us all communicating appropriately, JAM brings you a range of PEACHES to aim for and RASPBERRIES to avoid.

A Big Raspberry to...

■ **The three day contemporary music festival taking place in March** in three different towns which refuses to give potential audience members a single word of description of any of the pieces, just the composer and title. We need to tell people what the music will be like, so another raspberry to the leaflet for Jocelyn Pook, which, despite offering in very tiny print (and sideways) a sampler CD, restricts itself to biographical information and name dropping like this:

Jocelyn Pook is a composer and performer who brings together a passion for film, theatre and visual art as well as live music. Inspired by new technologies, she draws on musical traditions and voices from around the world, revitalising and showing new directions for 'classical' music. Jocelyn Pook's career as performer and

composer is as diverse as her musical and multi-media collaborations (from Impact and DV8 through to Massive Attack, Laurie Anderson, Peter Gabriel and P.J. Harvey), and her work constantly challenges the boundaries between 'high art' and 'popular culture'.

■ **It is possible to talk about contemporary, cutting edge work in an accessible way.** Here's Hull Time Based Arts:

Vicki Bennett, a.k.a. People Like Us has created and released over 25 CDs of cut-and-paste cultural hacking – remoulding radio and TV footage into subversive tunes to make you smile.

I suspect, though, that the marketer didn't write this next bit previewing the festival, which

appears on the back of the same leaflet:

Deep_ROOT is a metaphor for the rigorous research carried out by artists through theory, making and action. Deep_ROOT expands the relationship between science and art by presenting the quantifiable or immeasurable ways in which artists apply technology to their practice. It reflects a depth of philosophical, spatial or social investigation and expression. This can be seen in artworks about the body and social interaction with space and time, or a depth of immersion in physical or virtual space.

Peaches and Cream...

■ **What about this peach, though, from Trestle at the Arena in Wolverhampton:**

Only ten years old and ready to change the course of history. Lambert Simnell, crowned Edward VI in Dublin, marches into England, backed by German mercenaries, half-naked Irish warriors and whatever is left of the House of York.

Fast, funny and visceral, taking the audience on a wild ride from the confines of the Tower of London to the splendour of the French court and ending up bloodily in, of all places, Stoke-on-Trent. This was a confused period in our history, to say the least, and Trestle brings it brilliantly to life.

■ **Or this one from Graeae:**

An ultra modern passion play at the sharpest of cutting edges.

"in order to be made whole we must first be broken" Thomas Aquinas

Jade is a fan of her local casualty ward – and her

favourite doctor Chris. She will do anything to be admitted, even wound herself. But when Jade meets Robbie, a fellow patient hiding a very different secret, she undergoes a crisis of identity – with awesome repercussions.

■ **Or this one about an equally difficult subject matter** from Nigel Charnock and Company with Asylum: trust me I'm a doctor

Total mayhem as five stunning performers get into bed with Freud and Jung and play havoc with how mad we are to be normal. Charnock's writing and direction detonates a harrowing dark night of the soul.

Asylum erupts into an hilarious psychic storm of obsession, intrigue, lust, betrayal and revelation. Ransacking the unconscious, Charnock's company of five misfits crush egos and trample on traumas in a demonic fight for redemption from their everlasting insanity.

■ **And how great to see this clear and amusing guideline** about suitability for children from Company Gavin Robertson:

Due to the occasional swear word and recorded gunshots during the course of the show, the Company has granted the production a PG rating.

So... the peaches win four to two!

Make jam for the AMA.

Send your peaches and raspberries to the AMA by emailing info@a-m-a.co.uk.